Commencement Committee Minutes
July 12, 2000

The meeting of the Commencement Committee was held on Wednesday, July 12th at 11:00 a.m. Members present were: President Patton, Gayla Domke, Emory Edwards, Jerry Edwards, Charles Gilbreath, Penny Hallock, Kurt Keppler, Ralph LaRossa, Catherine McGovern, Larry Rifkind and Roger Weed.

Dr. Patton reminded the group that he keeps a working list of names for possible commencement speakers. Recent speakers were Christine Jacobs and Professor David Bottoms and both were outstanding. A number of names are being considered for the December commencement ceremony, including Senator Max Cleland. Others mentioned for future dates were Sherman Day, Bill Dahlberg and Hank Aaron. Suggestions from the committee of other names are welcome.

In reviewing the ceremony it was commented that there were not enough ushers, the vocalist was late and the fire alarm went off. However, the speaker did an excellent job. The ceremony is now broadcast on cable TV as well as video taped. There were around 500 people seated in overflow areas, such as Speakers Auditorium. Ticket rationing is the only way to handle the numbers wishing to attend. There were 5 volunteers from Staff Advisory Council who helped by answering questions and assisting latecomers in the Athletic Arena on the 1st and 2nd floors. The tickets do state that guests may not be seated during the commencement address. Tickets should be printed on glossy paper so they can't be duplicated. It was decided that a representative from University Police would be added to the commencement committee meetings. Signs in the Athletic Arena should be upgraded and that has been requested. More help is needed - - at least 8 ushers and a number of volunteers to answer questions and help with guests. An orientation hour for students and staff who volunteer could be arranged. Guests always say that our ceremony is outstanding. It was suggested that the commencement information given to students include the recommendation that they pre-arrange with family and friends where to meet after the ceremony.

The August ceremony will include the signed diplomas. The December ceremony will not. Instead there will be a look alike note handed out. The students selected the option of having the ceremony immediately after the semester, walking across the stage with names called, and not getting the signed diploma at that time. Jerry Edwards suggested possibly having a student with more of a role in the ceremony. He will talk with Larry Rifkind about possibly reading the "Reflection" in the ceremony. Dr. Keppler stated that regarding the posthumous degree, he will offer to have it presented to the family in the VIP Room reception prior to the ceremony.

The Board of Regents has approved the awarding of an honorary degree to Herman Russell. Dean Harris will check to see when he can be present for the presentation. This will probably be in August or December. The President of Egypt may be nominated for an honorary degree. He may be here next August. The Regents have approved our awarding up to two honorary degrees each year. The minutes of the April 26th meeting were approved as written.

Submitted by,
Frances B. Stone